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EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE
WINTHROP, IOWA

FILMING THE ELUSIVE BELL'S VIREO

By WALTER M. ROSENE

OGDEN, IOWA

"Listen! What's that?" I applied the brakes very suddenly and stopped our car without minding whether or not another car might suddenly crash into us. My ears had caught the call of a bird which I had not heard for 12 years. Mrs. Rosene and I were leisurely driving along a narrow wooded road which was bordered on both sides by a very dense growth of black haws, pin cherries, choke cherries, wild plum, wild grapes, bittersweet and sumac, all of which furnished a most excellent variety of food for birds, while the tall specimens of cup plants furnished water. This beautiful hilltop overlooking the broad Des Moines River valley almost opposite the Ledges State Park in central Iowa, is the nearest approach to a bird paradise to be found in our county.

With my car window open and my ears anxiously picking up each and every bird call, I was thrilled to hear the call of the Bell's Vireo (*Vireo belli belli*). This had been taught me by my friend Dr. Stephens many years before. I immediately began searching those dense thickets, but it was all in vain. I failed to get my eyes on the tiny little fellow with the warbling chuckle that no other bird has. N. S. Goss describes it as "an indescribable sputtering that does not rank high in the musical scale." Search as I would, I failed to see him, but still I was positive of the identification. This was in midsummer of 1939. Later we searched those thickets for nests but found none. We also returned in the fall after the leaves had fallen, but with the same result. The reason will be noted later. I was determined to watch this habitat in the following spring to see if these birds would return and nest there.

The nesting range of the Bell's Vireo is in the midwest. My friend DuMont in his 'A Revised List of the Birds of Iowa' states that they are "a fairly common summer resident in the southern and western parts of the state, somewhat rare in the northeastern portion, breeding throughout its range." In spite of this I have found very few observers who have many definite records of them, and I fail to find any articles on their nesting. Chapman states that it breeds in the Austral zones from northeast Colorado, southern South Dakota, northern Illinois, and northwest Indiana to eastern Texas, and is accidental in New Hampshire and Michigan. Forbush states that it has been taken only once in New England and its occurrence there is a mere accident, as its home is in the prairie regions of the west. Roberts states that there are only two positive Minnesota records. The U. S. Biological Survey reports show that only four of these birds were banded in the entire United States during the year 1939, hence they cannot be considered very common or well known.

With the assistance and co-operation of Myrle Jones, Park Naturalist at the nearby Ledges State Park, we soon found that they had returned in the spring of 1940. On May 26 we found three nests. I was jubilant, for now I knew that these tiny fellows with the warbling chuckle were living right in my own county and only a few miles from my home.

The first nest contained one vireo egg and a Cowbird egg. This nest was later destroyed. The second nest contained two Cowbird eggs and it was later abandoned. The third nest was still under construction. This was an interesting process for they started building it at the top where they laced it around the small crotch of a branch just three feet from the ground. It resembled a basketball net when we found it. On May 30 we returned and found this nest completed with the bottom completely laced in. It hung like a small shaggy

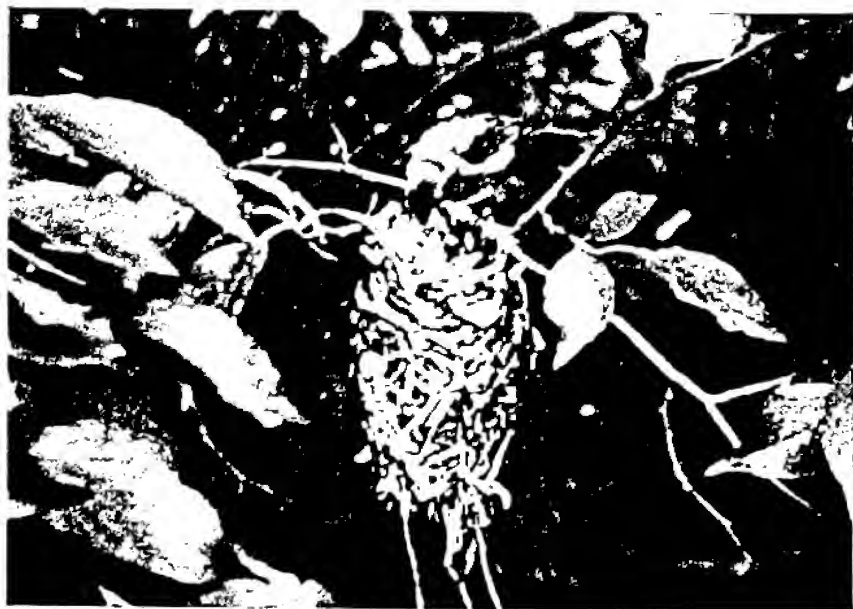
sack in the dark recesses of the thicket. The eggs of the Bell's Vireo are pure creamy white with a few fine specks on one end.

Each nest found had a shaggy appendage below and, being of a gray material, this resembled the sparse beard of an old man. The nests were not as compact and well built as those of the Warbling Vireo which withstand the weather and may be found quite well preserved nearly a year later. On the contrary, these nests were loosely built, which accounts for our not finding any the fall before. They barely hang together until the young are grown. This third nest remained empty until June 14, when it disappeared entirely. We found a fourth and fifth nest, and these were watched carefully. It was in these that we made our best records. At the fifth nest, which was the finest and best, we secured the series of colored motion pictures.

On June 9 the fourth nest contained three vireo eggs, and one Cowbird egg which I removed. On the same day the fifth nest contained four vireo eggs with none of the Cowbird. This nest was 5 inches in length on the outside but only 2 inches deep, which shows that there was a 3-inch shaggy appendage below. The nest was exactly 2 inches across the top. In this tiny basket just 2 by 2 four young vireos were raised to maturity.

On June 14 the fourth nest had three newly-hatched young; thus every egg had hatched. The old birds were scolding loudly as we came near the nest and we could easily see both of them. They resemble our Warbling Vireo except that they have a yellowish breast and two white wing-bars and are slightly smaller.

On June 22 I found three newly-hatched young and one egg in the fifth nest, and also one Cowbird egg which had been laid since June 19 or just as the young vireos were hatching. Of course, I removed this Cowbird egg, and on the next day, June 23, there were four young, so all four eggs must have hatched on June 22.



"SHE EMPTIED HER LOAD OF WORMS DOWN THE THROAT OF ONE OF THOSE HUNGRY YOUNGSTERS . . ."
Bell's Vireo photographed by Walter M. Rosene (enlarged from 16 mm. colored motion picture film).

On June 26, when the three young in the fourth nest were just one week old, I banded them with band numbers L68534-35-36. Two days later they had grown until they filled the frail nest. They had been kicking around until the nest was falling apart and I had to repair it with string to keep them from falling to the ground. On June 29 I found this nest empty. The young had all left when they were just ten days old.

The four lively youngsters in the fifth nest were all that remained for me to work on. They were well feathered out on June 29 when I visited the nest, but I failed to see either of the old birds and I feared something might have happened to them. I had waited to do my filming on the last nest which was the largest and the best of the five. Returning early the next morning, Sunday, June 30, 1940, I found that both old birds were busily on the job and the four young birds were more active than ever. I immediately set up my blind, crawled inside and set up my camera with the lens peering out at this family of birds exactly three feet away.

I entered the blind at exactly 8:15 a.m. and then began the usual watchful waiting to see how timid my subjects would be or whether they would be frightened away entirely. Exactly eight minutes after I entered the blind, one of the old birds stealthily approached from the rear with a mouth full of food. My heart almost stood still as I did not want to frighten her away. Nearer and nearer she came as I nervously "held the trigger" of my camera. As she finally emptied her load of worms down the throat of one of those hungry youngsters, my camera started humming and I knew that I had finally secured movies of the Bell's Vireo feeding her young. Before leaving on another trip for food she carefully cleaned the nest and carried the excrement away with her. Meanwhile the camera was humming away and getting the entire story.

The feeding operations continued throughout the entire forenoon. These were at the following intervals, each being carefully timed by my watch: 8:43, 9:08, 9:57, 10:05, 10:23, 10:25, 10:34, 10:39, 10:42, 10:47, 10:53, 10:54, 11:00, 11:09, 11:11, 11:13, 11:20, 11:22, 11:25, 11:28. It will be noted that the shortest interval was only one minute and the longest was 49 minutes. Worms may have become scarce at about that time.

The second feed consisted of green worms, and again the nest was cleaned; in fact, this cleaning was done in more than half of the times they were fed. The young would stretch their necks very high and the old bird would drop the food where she thought it belonged. Then as they were "trying to let their dinner settle," the old bird would turn her head to one side and fairly admire her little family in their swinging cradle. No human mother could admire her babies more than did this mother vireo.

Cloudy weather is the bane of color-camera operators, and right during the middle of the forenoon a thunder cloud came up and nearly ended my operations. However, it passed over after sprinkling a few drops of rain on the top of my blind. During that time it did some mischief, but in spite of that I had sunlight for at least half of the shots. The nest was in a dense plum thicket that was almost impossible to penetrate, and I had to do a lot of pruning before I could start filming.

The 18th feed consisted of a very large moth which the youngster swallowed with great difficulty. The 20th feed was a large insect which the lucky young vireo had more trouble to swallow and he struggled for some time with it. Perhaps they were quite well filled by the time this dessert arrived. The film shows it anyway.

I left this happy, well-filled family at noon and returned the following day, July 1, and found them well feathered out. I decided to band

them the following day. They filled the nest to overflowing on July 2. We carefully banded them with numbers L68538 - 39 - 44 - 66, and replaced them in their cradle. They were now quite yellow on their breasts with nice white double wing-bars and were exactly 10 days old. Returning the next evening, we found the nest empty, the young having left July 3 at the age of 11 days. We found two of them in the plum thicket. One was about 30 feet north of the nest and the other about 20 feet south.

We returned at noon the following day to get final pictures. As we approached the plum thicket one of the youngsters launched into the air on a trial flight and flew across the road, making a fairly safe landing in a tree. He bore band No. L68538, and I got my final pictures of him with his "government bracelet." Should any bird bander ever find him in his traps, I hope that he will report to me as I shall always be anxious to know what became of this interesting family which I watched so carefully. I now had banded seven Bell's Vireos in these two nests, which was three more than were banded in the entire United States during the previous year of 1939.

We saw no more of either the young or old birds as a large gravel-washing outfit for a paving contractor moved into the adjoining field and started operations; immediately all forms of wild life disappeared from that fine habitat. This field contained a chain of six or eight Indian mounds that I had watched since boyhood. In a few days the huge drag-lines were scattering the bones of the old Indian braves to the four winds. The roar of the huge gravel-washing machine and the drag-lines, together with the continuous stream of trucks, was quite different from the quiet solitude along that peaceful woodland road where my vireos had lived in peace and contentment.

What a tragedy to have the "pale faces" build cement roads out of the bones of the old Indians who formerly roamed these hills and lived peacefully with the vireos and all other forms of wild life! Will the ghost of old Sitting Bull stalk along the "trail of the pale faces" as they speed along in their "gas buggies" over the trail underlaid with the bones of his braves? It is no wonder that my vireos left their happy home at once, for it promptly ceased to be home when the white men started playing havoc with their so-called civilization.

If the Bell's Vireos should not return to this place in the spring of 1941, I shall be more than glad that I recorded the story of their last summer's nesting on my colored film. And I shall always remember these fine little fellows with their warbling chuckle.

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION

Our nineteenth annual convention will be held at Atlantic, Iowa, on Saturday and Sunday, May 10 and 11. We are very glad to accept the invitation of the Atlantic Bird Club to hold our meeting in their city. Glenn O. Jones, their Club president, says that plans are well under way for the event, and we feel sure that under the sponsorship of this active local club our convention will be up to the standard set by the conventions of other years. In 1926, when our Union was a youngster in its fourth year, Atlantic entertained us royally. Our older members who attended that year have not forgotten the important occasion. History will be repeated as we return to Atlantic in 1941. The place is especially favorable for the attendance of members living in central and western Iowa. There is good bird territory in that part of the state, and with the dates falling in the best part of the warbler migration, it is to be hoped that a large number of our members will be present.

As in other years, the first day of the convention will be occupied

with the presentation of papers and illustrated talks, followed by the business meeting and the Ornithologists' Banquet in the evening. On the next day, Sunday, the annual field trip will be taken. Details of the program cannot be given at this time, because the March issue of 'Iowa Bird Life' is made up too early to include this information. A mimeographed program and complete announcements will be mailed to each member a short time before the convention. Plan now to be with us at Atlantic on May 10-11!



OUR FIRST CONVENTION AT ATLANTIC, MAY 10-11, 1926

We are unable to identify all the persons in this photograph, as evidenced by the break in the numbering.

Seated on the ground: Walter M. Rosene, Mrs. A. J. Palas.

First (front) row, left to right: 2, Mrs. Arthur Leet; 3, Wier Mills; 4, Rev. LeRoy Thos. Weeks; 5, Mrs. Mary L. Bailey; 6, Mrs. E. R. King.

Second row: 7, Mrs. Thos. H. Whitney; 8, Dr. T. C. Stephens; 9, Mrs. Day; 10, Mr. Day; 11, Arthur J. Palas; 12, Thos. H. Whitney.

Third row: 13, Wm. Youngworth; 14, Eugene Hart; 15, Philip DuMont; 16, Kenneth Nelson; 17, Walter Rosene, Jr.

THE 1940 CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS IN IOWA

An unusually cold wave which descended on Iowa early in November, 1940, sent a large per cent of the late fall birds southward. With a cold month of November, and December at about normal temperatures, the large number of species shown by the combined bird censuses is a little surprising. December had a temperature range of more than 60 degrees. Recordings from different parts of the state varied from more than 60° above zero to 10°-15° below zero on various days. There were the usual snows as well. Although much different from the mild December weather of 1939, the bird list in Iowa was nearly as large.

We lack the space to comment on the unusual birds listed. There were many good finds and excellent winter records. The accompanying table gives this information in convenient form, and we recommend a careful study of the data contained therein. From it may be obtained a very accurate picture of Iowa's bird life in late December of 1940.

Nine Iowa censuses were published in the January-February, 1941, issue of 'Audubon Magazine' (formerly 'Bird-Lore'), pp. 126-128. These are indicated below, though we received copies of nearly all

the lists from the Iowa contributors at the time they were sent to 'Audubon Magazine', and so are not reprinted from that source.

Data on place, time, weather and the observers who reported are given below.

BACKBONE STATE PARK (Delaware Co.): Dec. 22; 9 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. Clear; 3 in. snow in the open, 6 in. in the timber; very light east wind; temp. 30° at start, 38° at return; total foot mileage in the park per person, about 5, and an auto ride from Winthrop to the park and return; roadside birds included in the census. Observers together except for short side trips on foot. Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Jones, Miss Margaret Murley, Paul A. Pierce, Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Pierce. ('Audubon Magazine')

CEDAR FALLS (Josh Higgins Park, Island Park to Snag Creek, return to Tourist Park; open deciduous timber, pastures, river bank): Dec. 28; 9 a. m. to 3:10 p. m. Overcast; light snow; light east wind; temp. 32°; total party miles afoot, 42. Observers in 2 parties. Mrs. Lola Deal, Mrs. Helen Tay, Mrs. Mary Eiler, John Bliese, Mrs. Margaret Bliese, Mrs. Jennie Baxter, Mrs. Beulah Rugg. ('Audubon Magazine')

CEDAR RAPIDS (Ellis Park, north along Cedar River for 1 mile, then to Amana Colonies): Dec. 29; 8:30 a. m. to 1 p. m. Cloudy; ground bare; no wind; temp. 32° to 36°; total mileage, about 50. Dr. Robt. Vane, Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Petranek, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Steffen, Misses Iola Tillapaugh, Hazel Cook, Lillian Serbousek.

COLD SPRINGS STATE PARK (and vicinity, near Lewis): Dec. 22; 2:30 to 5 p. m. Clear; 10 in. snow; no wind; temp 35°. Ten members of Atlantic Bird Club; report sent by Eugene Ruhr.

COUNCIL BLUFFS (timbered ravine east of Big Lake and Fairmount Park, both within city limits, and bottom lands south of city near Carr Lake Refuge): Dec. 26; 8:15 to 10:15 a. m. Cloudy and dark; raw northeast wind with velocity of 5 m. p. h.; temp. 34° at start and return; 1 mile on foot and 10 by car. Mrs. Violet Kennedy, Mrs. Thelma Schlott, Mrs. Alice Stiles, Jimmie Stiles, Bruce Stiles (Council Bluffs Bird Club).

DES MOINES (Waterworks Park or Charles Sing Denman Wood, Walnut Wood State Park, Brenton's Slough, Dovewood along Beaver Creek, Morning Star and Fisher's Lake area; afoot and by auto): Dec. 27; 7:30 a. m. to 5 p. m. Cloudy with poor visibility; scattered snow and soft under foot; wind velocity 8 m. p. h.; temp. 33° at start, 32° at return. Observers in four different groups. Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Binsfeld, Ralph Childs, A. F. DenBoer, Mrs. Russell Graves, Mrs. John W. Harvey, Miss Joy Harvey, Miss Olivia McCabe, Mrs. H. R. Peasley, Dwight Smith, Mrs. R. J. Thornburg, Mrs. Toni Wendelburg (Des Moines Audubon Society). ('Audubon Magazine')

DUBUQUE (Linwood Cemetery, Eagle Point Park, and Frenress Lake on Illinois side of Mississippi River 4 miles south of city; prairie hillsides, coniferous groves, wooded floodplain): Dec. 22; 8:30 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. Fair but somewhat hazy; no wind; temp. 30° at start, 42° at return; 2 miles afoot, 8 by car. Observers worked as a single party in 3 cars. Clifford Blades, Lyle Bradley, Ethan Hemsley, Henry Herrmann, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Heuser, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Johnson, Margaret Kohlman, Paul Kort, Al Kwasky, Bob McComish, David Reed, Ival Schuster, Donald Smith, Wm. A. Weber (Dubuque Bird Club). ('Audubon Magazine')

HARPERS FERRY (Mississippi River bottoms from Marquette to Dike No. 9, Yellow River, Paint Creek and adjoining bluffs): Dec. 22; 7:15 a. m. to 4 p. m. Clear; 6 in. crusted snow; light north wind; temp. 18° at start, 30° at return; total miles afoot, 8; total hrs. afoot, 5; total miles by auto, 58; total hrs. by auto 3¼. Observers together. Robt. Burling, Glenn R. Downing, Arthur J. Palas. (Audubon Magazine')

[illegible]

	Backbone State Park	Cedar Falls	Cedar Rapids	Cold Springs State Park	Council Bluffs	Des Moines	Dubuque	Harpers Ferry	Hornick	Keokuk	Ogden	Sigourney	Sioux City	Sumner	Tama	Waterloo	Webster	Woodward
Blue Jay (Pairing)	10	4	5	13	7	77	75	24	4	6	10	4	5	12	3	7	6	1
American Magpie	36	15	32	12	2040	1874	105	53	200	31	96	4	35	3	16	8	18	11
Crow	12	30	9	10	10	392	60	41	1	16	45	6	85	14	8	37	10	9
Truffed Titmouse	1	1	1	1	1	39	7	7	1	11	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	12	10	5	12	3	74	20	13	1	10	16	3	2	5	5	18	4	1
Brown Creeper	2	2	5	12	13	74	7	13	1	10	16	3	2	5	5	18	4	1
Brown Thrasher	2	2	5	12	13	74	7	13	1	10	16	3	2	5	5	18	4	1
Redwin	2	2	5	12	13	74	7	13	1	10	16	3	2	5	5	18	4	1
Humbird	2	2	5	12	13	74	7	13	1	10	16	3	2	5	5	18	4	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2	2	5	12	13	74	7	13	1	10	16	3	2	5	5	18	4	1
Cedar Waxwing	2	2	5	12	13	74	7	13	1	10	16	3	2	5	5	18	4	1
Northern Shrike	2	2	5	12	13	74	7	13	1	10	16	3	2	5	5	18	4	1
Starling	1	30	60	25	1	20	8	1	150	3	112	1	12	30	56	1	100	3
English Sparrow	100	31	130	100	609	250	165	1	45	112	82	39	75	50	50	25	1	1
Western Meadowlark	3	3	3	3	2	160	20	57	9	27	16	9	4	2	3	8	1	1
Red-winged Blackbird	6	4	3	4	2	160	20	57	9	27	16	9	4	2	3	8	1	1
Purple Finch	1	2	20	4	2	160	20	57	9	27	16	9	4	2	3	8	1	1
Common Redpoll	1	2	20	4	2	160	20	57	9	27	16	9	4	2	3	8	1	1
Pine Siskin	32	6	6	11	43	40	12	1	1	16	14	1	1	2	6	1	1	1
Goldfinch	32	6	6	11	43	40	12	1	1	16	14	1	1	2	6	1	1	1
Red Crossbill	12	52	15	50	298	50	20	20	52	73	1	8	40	6	43	1	12	12
Star-colored Junco	35	14	23	23	16	221	107	82	30	57	1	1	10	13	1	1	1	1
Tree Sparrow	35	14	23	23	16	221	107	82	30	57	1	1	10	13	1	1	1	1
Harris Sparrow	35	14	23	23	16	221	107	82	30	57	1	1	10	13	1	1	1	1
White-crowned Sparrow	35	14	23	23	16	221	107	82	30	57	1	1	10	13	1	1	1	1
White-throated Sparrow	35	14	23	23	16	221	107	82	30	57	1	1	10	13	1	1	1	1
Pink Sparrow	35	14	23	23	16	221	107	82	30	57	1	1	10	13	1	1	1	1
Song Sparrow	35	14	23	23	16	221	107	82	30	57	1	1	10	13	1	1	1	1
Number of Species	1	19	20	21	9	43	33	20	12	16	28	14	22	13	20	23	17	17
Number of Observers	6	7	8	10	5	12	16	3	2	10	2	4	15	9	31	71	1	1

Total Town List 69 species.

HORNICK (Hornick Bottoms southeast of Sioux City): Dec. 22. Clear; light wind; temp. 45°; 70 miles by auto. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Youngworth.

KEOKUK (along west bank of lake at duPont Powder Works, then west through woods near settlement, circling back and around shore of lake; also through woods and fields of Fred Lemon farm near by; and by car along river road between Rand Park and Price's Creek): Dec. 23; 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. Hazy in a. m., clear in p. m.; no wind; temp. 29° at start, 47° at return; total party miles, 15 afoot, 1 by car. Observers in 3 parties. Dorothy Wells, Lucy Jewett, Bob Miller, Victor Enoch, Roy Meaux, Leo Chance, Harry Nordstrom, Leo Lemon, Jim Hunter, R. F. Trump (Senior High Conservation Club). ('Audubon Magazine')

OGDEN (to north bridge and along wooded section of Des Moines River, open fields northwest of Ogden, along Beaver Creek southwest of Ogden, to Ledges State Park on Des Moines River southeast of Ogden, and return): Dec. 22; 7:30 a. m. to 5 p. m. Clear; 6 in. snow with few open patches; no wind; temp. 25° at start, 45° at noon, 40° at return; total miles, 8 afoot, 59 by car. Observers together. Robt. Walker, Earl R. Peterson. ('Audubon Magazine')

SIGOURNEY (ravines around Legion Park and down West Creek 1 mile): Dec. 24; 8:30 a. m. to 12 m. Clear; ground partly snow-covered; temp. 34° at start, 48° at return. Observers together. Mrs. W. C. DeLong and Girl Scouts Mary Ruth White, Mary Shopbell, Meriam Reynolds.

The Brown Thrasher was first seen by this group on Dec. 21, in a small bush near the town dump at Legion Park, and was studied with 8-power binoculars at 30 feet. On Dec. 24 it was seen in the same bush and it was approached closely.

SIoux CITY (Big Sioux River from Riverside Park to War Eagle's Park, Graceland and Logan Park Cemeteries, Stone Park, Municipal Airport, Brower's Lake, South Ravine, Grandview Park and Floyd River Valley; all in Woodbury County): Dec. 22; 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. Clear; melting snow on ground; light breeze; temp. 20° at start, 36° at return; total miles afoot, 7. Observers divided into seven groups. Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Armour, Mr. and Mrs. Herrold Asmussen, Daryl and Wilfred D. Crabb, Mrs. Marie Dales, Mrs. T. Max Foster, Jean Laffoon, Monte Lloyd, John Maynard, Jimmie McCall, Dr. and Mrs. J. L. Schott, Dr. T. C. Stephens (Sioux City Bird Club). ('Audubon Magazine')

SUMNER (west of town among scattered clumps of cedar and spruce, along small creek and open pasture land, then east of town to oak and hickory woods): Dec. 13; 8 a. m. to 12 m. Cloudy; 4 in. snow; sharp east wind; temp. 9° at start, 13° at return; diameter of total area censused, 3 miles; total miles afoot, 2. Beverly Fox, Marian Murphy, Leroy Snyder, Wilbur Howard, Vaylord Rosenow, Francis Gordon, Donald Messerer, Adella Shortau (Cardinal Cruisers Junior Audubon Club), and Miss Margaret Murley, Instructor.

TAMA (and vicinity): Dec. 26; 4 hrs. Mr. and Mrs. W. G. MacMartin, Miss Bay Brice.

WATERLOO (wooded areas near Cedar River from a point north of Cedar Falls to Waterloo, Lafayette Park in Waterloo, Black Hawk Creek area outside city limits): Dec. 28; 9:30 a. m. to 12:30 p. m., 1:30 to 4:15 p. m. Cloudy; ground partly covered with frozen snow; no wind; temp. 33° at start, 36° at noon, 39° at return. Observers divided into two parties in a. m., all together in p. m. Myra Loban, Lucile Loban, Mrs. J. L. Uban, Russell Hayes, Mrs. Ray S. Dix, Mary Young, Katherine Young. ('Audubon Magazine')

WEBSTER (Porter School southeast to South English River, then

west up-river 1 mile beyond highway, return across country to starting point): Dec. 26. Snow only in sheltered places; raw, cold wind; temp. above freezing; 10 miles on foot. M. L. Jones.

WOODWARD (weed patches, ponds, brushy ravines along small creeks): Dec. 25; 2 hrs. Cloudy and foggy; temp. 44°; 3 miles on foot and 10 by auto. Richard A. Guthrie.

Including time spent in checking the proof, preparation of the census consumes a day of the Editor's time. A few suggestions to contributors may be in order. Listing of species in the A. O. U. 'Checklist' order is a distinct help. Exact numbers of birds should be given, not general statements such as "many", "numerous". Description of weather and ground conditions adds value to the report, and exact hours should be given.

—F. J. P.

GENERAL NOTES

Barred Owls.—On my Christmas bird census trip in Keokuk County I had a rather thrilling experience. The 26th of December (1940) was a damp, cold, cloudy day with poor visibility. I was just leaving my best bird territory, plodding along through dense timber at the river's edge when not far away came the "who—who—who—who—ah" of the Barred Owl. Shortly the call came again—nearer. I grasped the situation just soon enough to "freeze" before the third call. And then we met. We were all three surprised. One owl stopped a few seconds on a limb over my path while the other sailed on a short distance and stopped to see what had interrupted their little game of tag. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, and it seemed to me that it was a bit irregular for them to be frolicking about in broad daylight.—MYRLE L. JONES, Toledo, Iowa.



JUNIOR CLUB MEMBER HOLDING A HORNED GREBE

This photograph, taken by Miss Margaret Murley, is reprinted from 'News on the Wing', Vol. 3, No. 2, January, 1941, through courtesy of the National Audubon Society, which publishes this magazine for Junior Audubon Clubs.

It shows Mary Anderson, a Junior Audubon Club member of Sumner, Iowa, holding a young Horned Grebe which was injured during a blizzard in the late fall of 1940. A farmer near Sumner rescued the young bird and helped it to get well.

Miss Murley has conducted a very successful Junior Audubon Club at Sumner. These junior clubs are sponsored by the National Audubon Society in the interests of conservation. By supplementing school science programs a new zest is added to Nature Study. Ten or more children of any age may enroll as a Junior Club, elect officers and plan their own programs, adapting them to their own interests and geographic location. A teacher, such as Miss Murley, or other adult serves as an advisor, while membership buttons and introductory bird study material are supplied by the National Audubon Society.

Screech Owls Bathing.—Many kinds of birds nested on our small home grounds in the summer of 1940, though not quite so many as nested here last year. A pair of Screech Owls in the red phase of plumage with four youngsters were very interesting to watch in our yard. Two of the young showed the gray plumage and the other two the red phase. They were often seen about our bird-bath. They always came to the bath at dusk to drink and bathe, but when the weather was extremely warm they came several times during the day as well. Three of them were very tame and unconcerned.—WALTER L. BURK, Vinton, Iowa.

A Night Heron Colony in Buchanan County.—Although nesting colonies of Black-crowned Night Herons are not rare in Iowa, groups of some size are of sufficient interest to warrant recording in our magazine. One such colony is located about five miles from my home, in Section 9 of Fremont Township, Buchanan County, Iowa. Here, on the Edgar Reed farm, is found a large, L-shaped, red-cedar shelter-belt which lies on the west and north sides of the farm buildings. The cedars are large and old, and average about 25 feet in height. Inside the belt of cedars are plantings of willows and a few young maples.

The first Black-crowned Herons came to the grove about four years ago, according to Mr. Reed, and each year they have returned in increased numbers due to the fact that the birds have not been shot or otherwise molested. Mr. Reed is a nature lover and, while the colony has almost assumed the proportions of a nuisance in the last year or two, he has watched them with interest and has allowed them to use his grove for their nestings. In 1940 about 50 pairs of herons nested at the place and at least 150 young were reared.

I visited the rookery in the early evening of July 4, 1940, and found it a very busy place. Many of the young were flying at that time, while the others in the nests were within a week or two of flight. There was a constant din—the young in the nests kept up a loud ticking sound; others slightly more aged squawked nervously, and the adults circled overhead in protest. My son and Mr. Reed's son moved along under the trees and drove up the herons while I followed along the west side and attempted to count them. They caught one young bird which was on the ground. It was about half grown and very lively. It clutched the low limbs near the ground and made rapid progress through the undergrowth.

Accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Myrle Jones, we visited the grove again on July 17. At that time most of the young herons were out of the nests. We found two young in one nest. These were taken out, banded and photographed, then replaced in the nest. This nest was in a young maple tree, about 12 feet from the ground. The herons use the maples, willows and cedars for their nests, but the last named tree contains most of the nests. Thus far only the west wing of the shelter-belt has been used, but if the colony continues to prosper, no doubt the north section will be used also.

Buffalo Creek, the only good-sized stream in the neighborhood, is three miles west of the rookery, but there is much swampy land near by and Prairie Creek, a tiny stream, crosses the Reed farm. The old herons range out over the country for miles on fishing trips. I have seen adult herons, after fishing along Buffalo Creek near my home, start off across country in the direction of the Reed farm.

Mr. Reed said that the herons drive away the Crows of the neighborhood, and they have never molested the eggs or young. Beginning early in August, Bronzed Grackles use the grove as a roosting place and many thousands congregate there nightly for several weeks before the fall migration.—FRED J. PIERCE.

The Chat in Davis County.—Three or more Yellow-breasted Chats were under observation at the Hillculture Experimental Station near Floris, Iowa, during the first three weeks of June, 1940. In the summers of 1939 and 1940 unsuccessful attempts were made to discover their nests. One of the birds was seen carrying twigs and grass into the dense underbrush. On quiet days the chats could be heard whistling and calling almost a half mile away.—IVAN L. BOYD, Floris, Iowa.

Belligerent Purple Martins.—Frank Miller, one of my neighbors, has a martin house on his property. In the spring of 1940 a pair of English Sparrows had already begun nesting in it when the Purple Martins arrived from the South. Fighting between the two species began at once, and all who watched were impressed by the aggressiveness of one of the martins. Not usually given to fighting with other birds, this martin would reach into the entrance-hole, clutch the offending sparrow by neck or one wing, drag it from the house, and fly as far as 25 feet before the sparrow was able to free itself. The sparrow always got back to the house first, however. The sparrow was pulled from the house dozens of times in the course of a couple of days, and several persons saw the encounters. The owner finally shot the sparrows. The martins then took possession of the compartment and nesting proceeded in the normal way.—O. P. ALLERT, Giard, via McGregor, Iowa.

Albino Catbirds and a Robin Roost.—Two young albino Catbirds appeared with their parents on the grounds of the Dr. Armstrong home in Ames in the summer of 1940. This home is on Woodland Avenue and is a very attractive place for birds, with a creek, native forest trees, thickets, etc. The albino birds had been there several days when I went to see them. They were still being fed by their parents, although full grown. Mrs. Armstrong and I examined them at close range and there seemed to be no colored feathers, not even in the under-tail coverts. I banded 27 Catbirds in the summer of 1940, and I noticed that the under-tail coverts were much duller in the young than in the adults; but the albinos did not seem to have a trace of color anywhere.

Late in August, the choke and black cherries having become exhausted, my birds moved into the dogwoods. It was very amusing. Nearly every branch, where any berries remained, swayed under its load of big fat Robins, Brown Thrashers and Catbirds. Occasionally they were joined by a pair of Kingbirds, but the latter birds were not cordially received by the others. Years ago, before our street received too much attention from the city authorities, a pair of Kingbirds nested each year in a tree on my neighbor's parking. Every August, after the berries were ripe and the little birds were able to fly, the family moved into the dogwood clump. Later the family moved to the bushes near the kitchen door. Now there are few Kingbirds in the neighborhood. Their tree was cut down and I seldom see them.

I have been very glad to note that our place has become a "Robin's Roost". Bradford Torrey in one of his books wrote of a roost near Boston where over 1000 Robins congregated at night. Of course, there was no such number at our home in Ames, but the Robins did come in from all over the neighborhood, and especially from the valley on the college property behind us. When I opened the kitchen door at night, there was a great commotion among the Robins as they fluttered and shifted about. I suppose the great amount of fruit on the place accounts for its popularity with these birds. They are also very abundant here in March and April, though of course there is no fruit here at that time.—MRS. F. L. BATTELL, Ames, Iowa.

A Nesting Great Horned Owl.—On the evening of April 6, 1940, I was walking in the deep timber just north of Monona, Iowa, and was startled by a high-pitched, piercing scream. Not far away a Great Horned Owl flew to the ground, flapping its wings in much the same manner as a Killdeer leads one away from its nest. The bird then flew upward into the trees as my dog took after it. After observing this behavior I started to leave the scene, whereupon the owl flew quickly toward me though keeping about 50 feet away and screaming loudly all the while. I went on my way and the bird did not follow. However, I returned shortly to the same place and the bird resumed its screaming. It fluttered its wings as though in anguish as it perched on a low branch of a nearby tree. This owl, probably a female, was no doubt trying to lead me away from the nesting site. I discovered the nest later, located about 30 feet high on the top of a basswood stump. On May 3 I saw an almost fully grown young owl in the nest. —GLENN R. DOWNING, McGregor, Iowa.

Notes from Woodward.—During the summer of 1940 a pair of Warbling Vireos nested above our house on a cottonwood limb, but the nest was abandoned before it was completed, probably because of too much smoke from the chimney. Then they built in a hard maple; this nest was about 10 feet from the ground and about 15 feet from our back door. Both the male and female incubated the eggs, and both would sit on the nest and sing. Two young were reared at this nest. The first one left the nest on July 3 and the other two days later. On June 30 a Bell's Vireo was heard in our orchard, but I was unable to see it.

On July 6, 1940, I was in the timber and found a Wood Pewee's nest. The old bird snapped her bill very sharply when I came near. On July 14 I saw my first Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, but though I made several later trips I was unable to find it again. On July 14 I found a Black-billed Cuckoo's nest containing one young bird and two eggs. The nest was in a hawthorn about three feet from the ground. Two days later two young were in the nest; a week later there were but two birds in the nest. I saw a young Red-eyed Vireo near there. On September 22 I saw two Ospreys flying over.—RICHARD A. GUTHRIE, Woodward, Iowa.

Peculiar Fishing Habits of Blue Herons.—During the summer and fall of 1939, my brother, C. F. Wolden, told me about the peculiar behaviour of Great Blue Herons on Mud Lake, which lake is situated some dozen miles southeast of Estherville. There was much fish in the lake and it was bank-full with rather deep water along most of its banks. There were some shallower bays where the herons could have pursued their usual style of fishing but they seem to have developed a new kind of technique. Instead of standing in shallow water and patiently waiting for their prey to come near enough for a stab, the herons would fly about over the lake and suddenly plunge into the water somewhat after the manner of a Kingfisher, sometimes almost becoming submerged. Then they would swim about in the deep water while swallowing their prey.

Although we had been familiar with the actions of Great Blue Herons since childhood, neither of us could recall having previously seen them plunge into deep water for fish nor swim about in deep water. Nor have I read about such action on their part. Perhaps this is not new to observers in other places. If others are familiar with such actions by the herons, I should like to hear about it. None were observed using such tactics on the lake during the past summer when the water was much lower with shallower beaches.—B. O. WOLDEN, Estherville, Iowa.

Notes from Dubuque.—On May 26, 1940, on a very small pond in a cow pasture, four of our Dubuque Bird Club members saw a female Northern Phalarope at a distance of only a few feet. This was our first record for the bird in this region. On this trip, in the same pasture, the group saw several Nelson's Sparrows, which was also a new species for our list. In mid-July an injured young Pileated Woodpecker was brought in from Massey Station, near Dubuque. In spite of the best care we were able to give it, the bird died the following day. The skin was preserved for the Senior High School museum. A pair of Pileated Woodpeckers are residents near Massey Station, and the injured bird was probably one of their offspring.

On December 25, 1940, three days after our Club took the bird census, R. W. Johnson and Wm. Weber found a Long-eared Owl in Mount Calvary Cemetery, Dubuque, and had a very good view of it as it sat in an evergreen tree. On December 29, a flock of 10 Long-eared Owls was seen in the cemetery by several members of our Club. Mr. Johnson and I had an excellent view of one sitting in a tree on January 5, 1941. On January 12, four of the boys and Mrs. Tupper saw the flock of 10. As soon as Mrs. Tupper told us, several of us went to Mount Calvary, but the flock had flown and we were able to find but one of the owls, which was near enough for easy identity. Our only previous record of the Long-eared Owl was made on our field trip of May 21, 1939, when one was found in Linwood Cemetery, Dubuque. It sat in one tree all day, in the shade of pine needles.—MRS. R. W. JOHNSON, Dubuque, Iowa.

Nesting of the Turkey Vulture in Van Buren County.—The discovery of two nests of the Turkey Vulture aroused considerable interest among bird lovers of Van Buren County. Although these birds are common in this region, there have been few observations of their nests. One was found about June 10, 1940, by Boone Long of Keosauqua. It was in a large hollow stump some four feet deep, on a wooded hillside. When I visited the nest on June 17, one egg was broken, and the birds did not return. A long stick, possibly used to annoy the adult, was protruding from the hollow stump.

The other nest, only about a mile from Keosauqua, was found by H. B. Clark on August 5, 1940. Two young vultures, their heads and underparts still white with down, would retreat into a narrow crevice in the side of the cliff when disturbed. But when approached quietly they could be seen standing outside the "cave" on a slab of stone. I drew one of the birds out of the crevice with a leg-hook and banded it, but the other retreated beyond reach of the six-foot wire. On August 13 I returned with Dr. Warren Keck, and by stalking we were able to cut off the vultures' retreat into the crevice. We caught and banded the other bird without difficulty. There were many downfeathers around the nesting site and we could see that they were being replaced with darker plumage. Some of tail feathers were still partially enclosed in their follicles.

The bird which we caught for banding regurgitated several times when molested. The food appeared to contain a good deal of viscera as well as muscle, and we estimated the mass to weigh at least a pound. When I returned to the cliff the next day, the food was gone. On my previous visits, both birds had regurgitated. Sometimes the food appeared fairly well digested.

An adult Turkey Vulture came near the nest only once while I was present. When I approached the nest on August 15 one of the young flew heavily down the hillside, and both were gone next day. On the 17th I saw three vultures perched in a nearby tree. Two of them appeared smaller, but the plumage by this time appeared the same from a distance.—RICHARD F. TRUMP, Keokuk, Iowa.

Some 1940 Records.—On April 11, 1940, F. A. Davis of the U. S. Biological Survey 'phoned that there was a Whistling Swan on Lower Gar Lake. We saw it that evening and several times after that. On April 28 we saw a Whistling Swan, probably the same one, on a pond east of Milford, a few miles from Lower Gar. More than the usual number of shore birds were to be seen in 1940: dozens of Red-backed Sandpipers, a flock of more than a dozen Ruddy Turnstones, 5 Western Willets in one flock, 50 Wilson's Phalaropes in a single pond with others in nearby ponds. The day after seeing the Wilson's Phalaropes, second group of about 100 were seen in a pond five miles from the first. We continue to see one or two Least Terns each spring. In 1940 we recorded Double-crested Cormorants on several occasions; there were 20 in one flock. The Black-crowned Night Heron colony just north of Spirit Lake, which numbered 200 to 300 nests, has been abandoned, but there seemed to be as many birds at the edges of the lakes as usual. A pair of Florida Gallinules probably nested near the north shore of Spirit Lake, as we saw them repeatedly during the nesting season. We did not have time to look for their nest. On October 8 we observed a Red-shafted Flicker north of Spirit Lake, in Iowa.

The day after the Iowa Ornithologists' Union convention, May 13, 1940, we spent several hours in a patch of woods 15 miles south of Iowa City. We recorded 10 Blue-winged Warblers there. We had seen several at a time in this patch of woods in previous springs. Our first nest of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen there that day, also, and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was added to our year's list.—F. L. R. ROBERTS, M.D., Spirit Lake, Iowa.

Winter Mallards.—During the week of January 30-February 6, 1941, we watched a flock of about 200 Mallards as they came in to feed in a cornfield not far north of us. They seemed to be most numerous at about five o'clock in the afternoon.

I saw 130 species of birds on our farm during the year 1940. On August 29, 1940, I saw a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher here, my first and only record of this bird. The Killdeer seemed to be scarce in this locality in 1940.—PEARL KNOOP, Marble Rock, Iowa.

An Albinistic Nuthatch.—On several days in the fall of 1940 my mother had told me of seeing a new white bird just outside the window and about the food shelter. One day I got to the window before the other nuthatches had chased it away and found that it was a White-breasted Nuthatch also, but peculiarly marked. The top of the head, nape and that part of the back between the wing joint, and all the wing except the primary and secondary feathers, were very light rusty color, but not solid, over light gray. The rest of the bird, as Mother had said, was a silvery white. This white bird looked very odd running head-first down the tree trunks. It did not stay long as the other nuthatches drove it away.—WALTER L. BURK, Vinton, Iowa.

Whistling Swan at Lake Manawa.—On the evening of November 8, 1940, I had a call from Pat Madigan who said he had been at Lake Manawa just at dusk that day and had seen a swan come in and light on the north shore. He described the exact location to me, and I was there the next morning before daylight. When it grew light the bird got up not more than 100 yards from me. It flew toward me for a short distance and then turned east across the lake, calling with a flute-like note. The call was soft and musical in quality and by this I identified it as a Whistling Swan. On November 17 Emmett Hannan and three other hunters reported to me that they had seen a swan on Lake Manawa that day.—BRUCE F. STILES, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Whistling Swan at Atlantic.—A Whistling Swan fell a victim to the early blizzard of November 11, 1940. It was discovered, wedged in a crotch of a tree, by Fritz Simpson and Tom Henningsen. The boys dislodged the bird and took it home, thinking they had found a goose. Glenn Jones, our bird club president, heard about the bird and went to see it. He identified it as a Whistling Swan and made arrangements for shipping the specimen to Iowa State College for preservation in the college museum. The bird was a very nice specimen, weighing 12½ pounds and measuring about five feet from tip to tip.—EUGENE RUHR, Atlantic, Iowa.

NECROLOGY

John Clark Hartman died at his home at Waterloo, Iowa, January 3, 1941, after a month's illness. He was born at Waterloo on June 21, 1861, and spent his lifetime in that city. His father, W. H. Hartman, was a pioneer newspaper publisher who began publication of 'The Courier' in Waterloo in 1858. John Hartman began newspaper work as a boy in his father's office and he continued in this work all his life. At the death of his father in 1895 he became editor of 'The Courier', which position he held until his death. He was very widely known and highly respected. He was always interested in projects for the betterment of his city and its residents. In 1939 he became a member of our organization.

From a biographical sketch of John Hartman in 'The Courier' we quote the following paragraph: "Interested from boyhood in hunting and fishing, he was an earnest advocate of wild life conservation and this topic received frequent mention in the columns of the Courier. He was a student of Iowa history, particularly that of the northeast part of the state; and accumulated a mass of data on the Indian inhabitants and the coming of the white man. He was a life member of the Iowa State Historical Society. In 1915 he edited a 'History of Black Hawk County and Its People'."

RECENT BIRD BOOKS

WINGS AT MY WINDOW, by Ada Clapham Govan (Macmillan Co., New York City, 1940; cloth, pp. i-xv+1-198, with pencil sketches in the text; price, \$2.50).

This is an inspirational account of the pleasure derived by a 'shut-in' who discovered birds and proceeded to cultivate their friendship by erecting shelters, feeding-trays and other devices on her home grounds at Lexington, Massachusetts. The environment was ideal for attracting the birds, which responded in increasing numbers over a period of years. The author, who had overlooked birds during her previous life, made the chance acquaintance of a Chickadee which flew upon the window-sill during a blizzard. This meeting proved to be a turning point which altered the course of her life. She began the serious study of birds and used every means to attract them to her home. After a time she began to write about them, and in this field also she made a worth-while discovery—that she could write for publication. She found a ready market for her work, and a long series of magazine and syndicated newspaper articles began to flow from her facile pen. It is in this work that Mrs. Govan deserves much credit. Her writings have attained a wide circulation and have served to awaken an interest in birds in hundreds of people who, as in her own case, didn't know that birds existed. Educational work of this extent is truly an achievement. The book will have an especial appeal to afflicted persons who may see in their trouble a parallel case and who will find new hope and take a renewed interest in life through association with birds, just as Mrs. Govan did.

The author identified 111 species of birds in her yard; she holds a banding permit and has banded 42 species. When an adjacent woodland was threatened, her reader friends responded with gifts which were sufficient to insure the preservation of the tract as a permanent bird sanctuary.

The serious bird student may find it hard to reconcile himself to Mrs. Govan's style of writing, which is breezy and effusive with frequent resort to exaggeration to gain the desired effect. This is perhaps the modern trend, even though it may seem light reading for a bird book. No doubt a more conservative style would have lacked the quality to interest people who had never known birds. A flock of Rusty Blackbirds is described as "a cloud of midnight blackness coming towards me," and Pine Siskins "aren't bigger than a peanut"—to cite only two examples of a loose handling of words. Every incident is dramatized and played up in a florid way. The birds are consistently humanized and parade through the pages like so many people, impelled by motives and with mannerisms that are certainly more human than bird-like.—F. J. P.

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THE GREAT HORNED OWL AND ITS PREY IN NORTH-CENTRAL UNITED STATES, by Paul L. Errington, Frances Hamerstrom and F. N. Hamerstrom, Jr. (Research Bull. 277, Iowa State College, Ames, Sept., 1940; wrappers, pp. 757-850, with 4 figs.).

This treatise is designed principally for wild life technicians who are concerned with the predation of the Horned Owl and its effect on game birds and other wild life. As such it fills a niche in a particular field and will no doubt prove of much value to specialists in this work. The bulletin is prepared from researches made under the auspices of the United States Biological Survey, the American Wildlife Institute and the Iowa Conservation Commission. The earliest investigations were conducted in 1929, and the work has been continued up to the present time.

A number of areas in Wisconsin and Iowa were carefully worked, and the bulk of the report is devoted to detailed analyses of the pellets secured in the various localities in different seasons of the year. In addition to field observations, studies were conducted at 84 Horned Owl nests, and 4,815 pellets and 23 food-containing stomachs were examined. The regurgitated pellets formed the best index to the food habits of this predatory species, as they show the remains of the owls' prey in such condition as to be readily identifiable; the experts in working them over can gain a very accurate knowledge of what the Horned Owls' food has consisted of during that season. The paper contains a careful tabulation of the contents of this large number of pellets and stomachs. The prey types studied were upland game birds, waterfowl and fur-bearers chiefly, with a few other forms included incidentally. In the summary the authors state: "On the whole, it seems doubtful if north-central horned owls and associated predators exert a dominant influence upon populations of prey animals taken." —F. J. P.

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The State of New Mexico Dept. of Game and Fish, Santa Fe, announces that copies of Florence Merriam Bailey's 'Birds of New Mexico' are still available at that office, price \$5 for the regular edition and \$10 for the DeLuxe edition. This book was published in 1928, and for a number of years the information was circulated that it was out of print—perhaps by dealers who had copies which they wished to sell at a premium. It is one of the most important of state bird books, containing 800 pages and profusely illustrated by photographs and a series of colored plates by Allan Brooks, with excellent

binding. This is an opportunity for bird students to obtain a noteworthy book at the original publication price.

One of the newest mimeographed bird serials is 'The Phoebe', official publication of the Council Bluffs Bird Club, Vol. 1, No. 1, of which appears under date of December, 1940. It contains notes and news of this active bird club and will be useful to club members in that area. Another mimeographed club journal issued in Iowa is 'The Dickcissel' of the Sioux City Bird Club. Presumably it is being continued, although we have not seen copies for a year or so.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Dr. F. L. R. Roberts of Spirit Lake has been appointed president of the University Alumni Committee of the Lakeside Laboratory.

Walter Rosene made a trip to Alabama at Christmas and enjoyed a two-weeks vacation with his son Walter Jr. and family in the "Deep South." Mr. Rosene very generously contributed many hours of his time and checked the proof of our five-year index against the original references in 'Iowa Bird Life'. The Editor began work on the index as soon as the September issue was published and his MS was sent to the printer on October 30. Proof was not received from the printer, however, until December 6, and as a consequence Mr. Rosene could not finish his part of the work before he went to Alabama, and our December issue was delayed. It was gratifying to note the number of persons who wrote in to report that their December issue was missing. This indicated a genuine interest in our little magazine.

On March 3, Walter Rosene gave a talk before the Cedar Rapids Bird Club on "Nature and the Color Camera", illustrated by colored movies and slides of his own taking. On March 4 he repeated the showing before the Dubuque Bird Club. Editor Pierce was present at Dubuque, and he is glad to report a very fine series of films, an unusually interesting lecture, and a large and appreciative audience. Mr. Rosene's pictures included those of the Duck Hawk nesting near Lansing, Iowa, and the home life of the Bell's Vireo which he describes in the article in this issue of 'Iowa Bird Life'.

MOURNING DOVE LEGISLATION. A hardy perennial that springs up at nearly every session of the Iowa Legislature is the proposal to place the Mourning Dove on the list of game birds. When the Legislature met in January bird lovers soon learned that a bill was to be introduced which, if passed, would permit the hunting of Mourning Doves in Iowa from September 15 to October 15 of each year. The bill, which was sponsored by certain sportsman groups, was evidently planned quietly with the hope that it would be passed promptly by the House and Senate before it had been given much publicity. The news spread quickly, however, and bird lovers over the state were aroused.

Letters by the dozen, chain letters and individual ones, were written by our members to other bird students, urging them to write their Representatives and Senators to oppose the bill when it came up. Among those who wrote many letters in behalf of the dove were Walter Rosene, Dr. and Mrs. F. L. R. Roberts, Dr. Warren Keck, Judge O. S. Thomas, Dr. T. C. Stephens, Walter Burk, J. Wilbur Dole, F. J. Pierce, Mrs. Toni Wendelburg, and many others. Mrs. W. G. MacMartin, who is chairman of the Conservation Dept. of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, an organization with nearly 900 clubs in Iowa and over 40,000 members, sent about 100 letters to prominent members.

A very fine appeal was made in an 1100-word letter printed by the Sioux City Bird Club and given a state-wide circulation. From this

letter we take these effective excerpts: "What possible sport can be realized in hunting a Chickadee, a Robin, or a Meadowlark, or even a Mourning Dove? There are many high-minded sportsmen, but we do not believe that they are supporting this fund-raising measure . . . It is also argued that the Mourning Dove is a good game bird because it is hard to hit while in flight. This is wishful thinking. The cruising speed of the Mourning Dove was determined by Wood to be 32 miles per hour, much less than any game bird. Past experience has shown that when an open season is declared on a given species, any other bird of similar size is time and again shot by hunters who are ignorant, or pretend to be ignorant, of the differences in identity. And in this case, if shooting of doves is legalized, it may be expected that many other kinds of birds will suffer also."

The campaign progressed with accompanying newspaper publicity in the form of special articles, editorials and news notes. There were telephone calls, trips to Des Moines, interviews with Representatives and Senators, and other forms of response to the call to save the dove. The spirit of loyalty and co-operation among bird lovers over the state was very enthusiastically displayed. On February 6 the House committee recommended death for the Mourning Dove bill, and on the following day the Senate Conservation Committee decided on "indefinite postponement" of the bill, which was a way of killing the measure. The Iowa press release of February 8, 1941, reported the Mourning Dove bill as dead. There is not one valid reason why the gentle dove should be placed on the list of game birds. Iowa bird lovers rallied to the dove's defense and were successful in keeping it from being placed there.

WHITNEY HOTEL

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GOOD MEALS AT THE COFFEE SHOP